

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

10 April 1953

SUBJECT: SE-43: REACTIONS OF THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD TO
CURRENT COMMUNIST TACTICS

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the probable effects of current Communist "con-
ciliatory" tactics on the peoples and governments of the non-Communist
world, and the probable courses of action which the major non-Communist
countries may pursue in response to a possible continuation of those
tactics.

DISCUSSION

1. The Communist shift in tactics has been manifest for so
brief a period that there is as yet little evidence on which to base
an estimate of the effects upon the peoples and governments of the
non-Communist world. The popular reactions have been on the whole
at least guardedly hopeful, while the reactions of governments and
political leaders have been tentative and cautious.

2. The vulnerability of the non-Communist world to "peace" tactics has been acknowledged in previous estimates. Concessions on the POW issue sufficient to bring about an armistice in Korea, combined with minor concessions elsewhere and a series of conciliatory gestures and statements, would be well calculated to play upon this vulnerability. The fact that the change in tactics followed almost immediately on Stalin's death makes it plausible to believe that a real change is taking place in Soviet policy. Moreover, Western governments are likely to be responsive to any suggestion of a genuine moderation of the cold war because they are presently confronted with such problems as latent disagreements over possible US measures to end the Korean war, the stagnation of negotiations over the terms on which West Germany is to be admitted into the Western coalition, and economic strains attendant upon efforts to raise defense programs to higher levels. The moment is one, therefore, in which the governments and peoples of the West are likely to respond favorably to Kremlin overtures.

3. The reactions of non-Communist peoples and governments will probably be influenced greatly by the manner of the US response to the new Communist tactics. Should the US response be seen abroad as adamantly negative, there would tend to be a decline in the willingness of other states to follow US leadership. On the other hand, if it

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appeared that the US, relying on Communist professions of peaceful intent, was about to reduce drastically its defense effort and its aid to its allies, the confidence of the Western Powers in US leadership would be undermined. If, however, the US appeared willing to negotiate, in consultation with its allies, but at the same time appeared determined to maintain its military readiness and defensive posture, the non-Communist world would be likely to continue responsive to US leadership. In this event, there appears to be a good chance of averting the separation of the other Western Powers from the US, which is almost certainly a primary aim of the new Communist tactics.

4. The governments of Western Europe which depend upon shifting parliamentary majorities may have increasing difficulty in sustaining their defense programs and in working in harmony with the US if an armistice in Korea does result, and is followed by conciliatory moves in Europe, such as an end to the harassment of Berlin or an Austrian peace treaty. The effectiveness of Communist parties in some countries may increase as they develop united front tactics and seek to associate with themselves in "peace" fronts those non-Communist elements which are pacifist, hostile to the US, or opposed to the association of a rearmed West Germany with the West. The French Government would probably be peculiarly vulnerable to these tactics, and in Italy the center coalition of De Gasperi might fail to win a majority in the coming elections. The Adenauer coalition would also be endangered in

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its election campaign. Communist strength in West Germany would probably not greatly increase. However, neutralists, the anti-Western Right, and the Social Democrats would probably gain strength if there seemed a possibility of re-uniting Germany by negotiations with the USSR.

5. Ostensibly attractive trade offers which could be expected to accompany the Communist "peace" tactics might constitute an increasingly formidable Soviet weapon, particularly if there were economic reverses in the West. The sharply widened dollar gap which would result from even a minor recession in the US would increase the difficulties of maintaining present controls on trade with the Soviet Bloc.



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6. Far Eastern issues which may arise in connection with or subsequent to an armistice in Korea are likely to be the most immediate source of danger to the relations between the US and its allies. The views of the US and its allies might seriously diverge on a final political settlement in Korea, on the future of Formosa and the Chinese Nationalist Government, on Communist China's admission to the UN, and on trade with Communist China. The consequences of such divergence would be most serious if failure to settle Far Eastern issues appeared to the allies of the US to prevent settlement of pressing issues elsewhere.

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8. We do not believe that any Kremlin proposals on disarmament are likely to find a widespread response in non-Communist countries or to divide the Western allies so long as major political issues remain outstanding between East and West.

9. The abandonment by the Communist Bloc of its aggressive tactics toward the non-Communist world would probably have little effect in the Middle East states, where the importance of the East-West struggle is overshadowed by the more immediate problems posed by the Palestine dispute and relations with the West. The Communist shift in tactics would be felt chiefly through changes which might eventually take place in the policies of the US and its Western allies toward the Middle East states. In any event, it is unlikely that current Middle Eastern problems would either be greatly aggravated or brought much nearer to solution in consequence of the new Communist tactics.

10. Some realignment of the policies of member states in the UN would doubtless result from any easing of East-West tensions.

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There would probably be an increasing tendency for smaller powers to act in concert against the larger, and closer alignment of the Arab-Asian and Latin American blocs might be one consequence.

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